

PERSONAL STORY OF FIERRO, THE MEXICAN, WHO KILLED BENTON, THE BRITISHER

BY W. H. DURBOROUGH.

It was a big surprise to me to hear that Gen. Carranza's commission had fixed the blame for the death of the Englishman, Wm. S. Benton, on Maj. Fierro, but I was also glad to know that Gen. Villa, who treated me so well while I was campaigning with the rebels, had been exonerated of the murder.

When I first met Fierro he was on the staff of Gen. Villa at Juarez. A few days later he was appointed trainmaster of all trains operating with Gen. Villa's army. He did his work well at the battle of Terra Blanca, keeping the water, provision and hospital trains moving between Juarez and the battlefield in fine shape.

I spent a great deal of time with him in Chihuahua after Villa's army entered the town, and on several occasions he called for me with his machine and showed me the town and points of interest.

His worst failing was that he drank more than was good for him, but I never saw him violent, and I am inclined to think Benson must have attempted to escape or done something exasperating to incite Fierro to murder him.

The rebels, like most Mexicans, have no love for Americans, but they look on correspondents and photographers from our side as necessary evils and let them move about in peace. However, nothing delights them so much as to throw a scare into an American.

I was in Chihuahua when the rebel forces left to fight the battle of Ojinaga, and, instead of making the long march with them, I intended going north to the border and then to the point on the border where Ojinaga is located, by some American conveyance. When I was ready to go north there were no trains running and Fierro said he could not promise one

for several days, being short on such little necessities as locomotives. He asked me where I was stopping and I told him.

Just as I began to feel that I was going to miss the shooting at Ojinaga I was roughly pulled out of bed one



Major Rodolfo Fierro

night by two soldiers who marched me to the depot. There I found Fierro with a pass for me on a troop train which was being made ready to go north to Juarez. He had practically placed me under arrest in order to get me to that battle.

My Mexican friends who ran the hotel were very much excited and thought I was another gringo on the way to face a firing squad.